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NEWS WORTH SHARING.

12-year sentence handed down in Surrey Six trial

But with time served, former gang leader will only spend three years in jail PAGE 3

Canucks have winning streak snapped at 7

Minnesota slips by Vancouver with a 3-2 shootout win PAGE 30

Ford's apology just doesn't satisfy reporter

Defamation suit going ahead after Toronto mayor suggested scribe was a pedophile PAGE 10

WHAT, YOU CALLIN' ME A CON MAN AND COPYCAT?

CHRISTIAN BALE PULLING FROM LONG LINEAGE OF CROOKS IN AMERICAN HUSTLE PAGE 22

Cheers! Happy hour is near. Patrons raise a glass at Vancouver's Parallel 49 brewery in this file photo.
JENNIFER GAUTHIER/FOR METRO

Happy hours part of liquor reforms

Bottoms up. Latest series of changes expected to be passed as legislation in spring

KATE WEBB
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Restaurateurs are raising a toast to eight new measures announced Tuesday that will liberalize B.C.'s liquor laws, including the introduction of happy hours and the end of forced food orders with liquor at restaurants.

Entrepreneurs have been complaining for years that because of a moratorium on liquor-primary licences in some cities, they have had no choice but to force patrons to order food with their booze.

Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association spokesman Mark von Schellwitz said the move is likely to spur new investment in B.C. once Premier Christy Clark's Liberal majority passes it as legislation in the spring.

"One award-winning pub business trying to get a licence spent $450,000 in consulting fees and legal fees (trying to get a liquor-primary licence in Vancouver), two years of the CEO's time, and as a result of that they didn't invest," he said.

"They were going to invest in six pubs. That's a $17-million investment, 420 jobs, that didn't happen. As a result of today's announcement, that will happen and I think it's a really positive thing for employment growth."

Parliamentary Secretary for Liquor Policy Reform John Yap said that unlike Ontario, where there is one type of liquor licence for all restaurants and bars, B.C. will continue to issue food- and liquor-primary licences. The fine details of how they will be distinguished once the new rules take effect are still being worked out.

B.C. is also the last jurisdiction in the country that does not allow happy hours. Timing as well as minimum pricing restrictions will apply, the premier announced at a press conference in Vancouver.

Clark also said minors will soon be allowed into bars and pubs, such as legions, until certain hours; strip clubs and casinos are excluded.

Yap's final report after a three-month review of the B.C.'s liquor laws contains 70 recommendations, which have been trickling out in fits and spurts.

After Tuesday's announcement, 49 recommendations have yet to be released. The province has promised to make them public before Feb. 15.

Other recommendations:

- Allow patrons to carry open alcohol from a pub to an adjoining restaurant.
- Allow restaurants to apply for a licence endorsement to operate as bar or club after certain hours.

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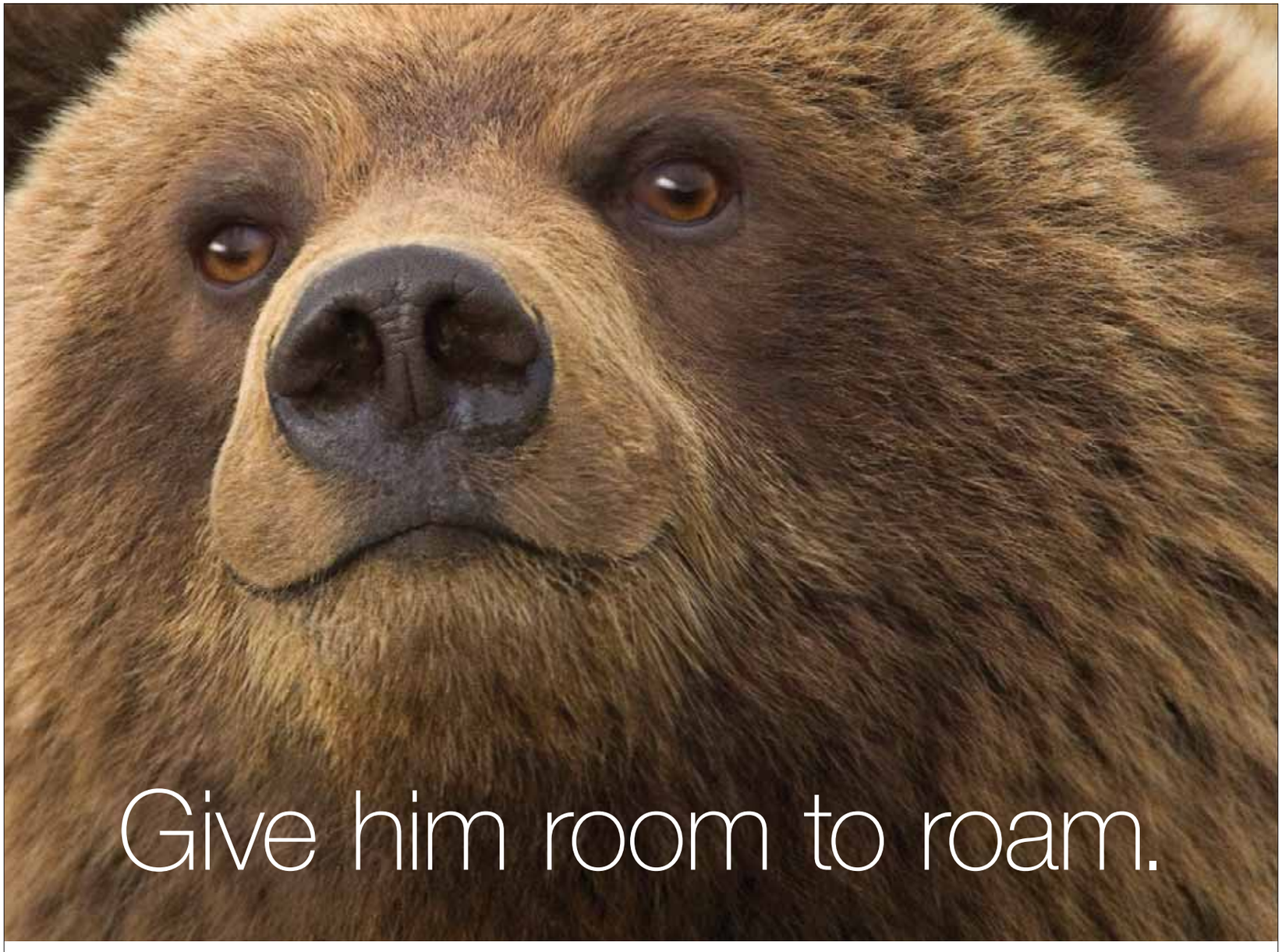

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Suspicious death

Discovered body could make 2013 a record year for homicides in Surrey

Police are investigating a body that was discovered in Surrey on Tuesday morning.

Surrey RCMP were called to an area near 102nd Avenue and 124th Street and called the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) after the initial discovery.

"Details such as the victim's age or gender are not known. IHIT is treating this as a suspicious-death case at this time until further examination of the scene is completed," said Sgt. Bari Emam of IHIT in a statement.

If the death is confirmed as a homicide, it will be Surrey's 24th of the year, making it the city's highest ever.

This comes after Surrey Mayor Dianne Watts assigned a special task force of police, educators and criminologists to analyze the city's high homicide rate last month.

Watts noted that Surrey goes through spikes in murders every four years; therefore, she said the task force will look at the contributing factors of homicide and examine four-year cycles of crime.

IHIT is asking anyone who was in the area of 124th Street and 102nd Avenue prior to 11 a.m. Tuesday and may have seen anything suspicious to call 1-877-551-4448.

SINDHU DHARMARAJAH/METRO

Ex-gang leader to serve 3 more years

Surrey Six. Sentence relates only to killing of man called a rival drug trafficker in court

A former gang leader who helped plan a killing in the Vancouver area that left six dead will have just over three years left to serve in a sentence imposed Tuesday.

Quang Vinh Thang (Michael) Le, 28, pleaded guilty last month to conspiracy to commit murder for his role in the Oct. 19, 2007, deaths at a Surrey highrise.

He was in court Tuesday for a sentencing hearing that also included emotional victim-impact statements from two family members and an apology from Le himself.

The Crown and defence submitted a joint proposal for a 12-year sentence. With credit for time already served, Le would have just over three years left on his sentence.

Le had been standing trial since late September along with Matthew Johnston and Cody Haevischer, whose murder trial is continuing.

The court heard an agreed statement of facts that said the killing began as an execution of a rival drug trafficker named Corey Lal. Another five victims — including 55-year-old fireplace repairman Ed Schellenberg and 22-year-old building resident Chris Mohan — were also killed to eliminate potential witnesses.

Le was originally charged with one count each of conspiracy and first-degree murder, but the murder charge was dropped. His conspiracy conviction is only related to Lal's murder.

Le was one of the leaders of the Red Scorpions gang, the court heard.

The statement of facts said another one of the gang's leaders, Jamie Bacon, who has yet to stand trial, came to Le in September 2007 with a plan to kill Lal after Lal failed to pay a $100,000 "tax."

Initially, Le suggested they rob Lal instead, but later he agreed to the plan, according to the statement of facts.

It goes on to say that they sent Johnston, Haevischer and a third man, who can't be named, to carry out the killing.

When it was over, Le was "shocked" to learn six people had been killed, including his longtime friend, 22-year-old Edward Narong, according to the statement of facts.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Eileen Mohan, mother of victim Chris Mohan, appears at a courthouse in Vancouver for the sentencing of Michael Le on Tuesday. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Consequences

"Mr. Le ... pleading guilty ... does not take away the fact that it is too late to bring the day Oct. 19, 2007 back. Nor does it heal my soul of losing my only son to your crimes."

Mother Eileen Mohan in a victim-impact statement

Federal review panel to issue report on Northern Gateway

Pipeline. Report will recommend whether project should proceed

A federal-review-panel report on the proposed Northern Gateway pipeline will be released this week, following more than a year of hearings throughout B.C. and Alberta.

The highly anticipated report will be released Thursday afternoon in Calgary and will include the panel's recommendation on whether the project should proceed.

The final decision, however, rests with the federal government, which has 90 days to decide.

As the Dec. 31 deadline for the report neared, Ivan Giesbrecht, spokesman for Northern Gateway, said the hearings were the most thorough in history and he felt confident the decision would be based on solid science.

"We put a lot of hard work and effort into this process and we have confidence in the joint review panel, that they have reviewed it thoroughly and done it to the highest standards possible," Giesbrecht said.

The controversial $6-billion proposal that would link the Alberta oilsands with a tanker port on the B.C. coast has pitted the proponent, Calgary-based Enbridge, against environmental groups and several First Nations.

The pipeline became a lightning rod in the debate over global climate change and raised concerns about the possibility of an oil spill on land or off the coast of B.C.

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A protester holds a sign during a demonstration against the Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipeline in Vancouver on Jan. 14. DARRYL DYCK/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Tax increase. City passes $1.2B budget for 2014

Despite a few councillors criticizing the so-called lack of detail in Vancouver's 223-page budget, city council passed the slight spending increase for the New Year.

The $1.2-billion 2014 budget is $29.6 million higher than in 2013, with the extra cash funding employee expenses and a handful of new capital projects.

To pay for this, property taxes will be raised 1.9 per cent and utility fees will jump one per cent. For the owner of an average single-family home valued at $1 million, that's $65 more out of your wallet.

Vision Vancouver councillors lauded the budget for the specific metrics it includes (it notes exactly how many people used its recreation programs, for example) and for the value it provides.

But Green Party Coun. Adriane Carr and the two NPA councillors were less enthused by the document, which Carr said had "too many words and too much spin." EMILY JACKSON/METRO

Kamloops

Virus outbreak forces restaurant to shut down

An outbreak of norovirus that sickened more than three dozen staff at Royal Inland Hospital in Kamloops, B.C., has been traced to a restaurant in that city.

Interior Health says Dorian Greek House has been closed temporarily after the doctors, nurses and other hospital staff became ill last week, several days after attending a party catered by the restaurant.

The illnesses forced cancellation of 26 elective surgeries last Thursday and Friday, but the hospital confirms a full slate of operations had resumed by Monday. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Should theatre sign name a corporate sponsor?

A rendering of the proposed sign at the York Theatre, which would include sponsor West Coast Reduction's logo. CONTRIBUTED

Public consultation. It found that 74 per cent of neighbours supported the signage

The newly opened York Theatre could land a $2-million donation if it names a corporate sponsor on its sign.

But before the performance centre gets the go-ahead to broadcast the name of longtime local sponsor West Coast Reduction from its perch on Commercial Drive, Vancouverites will get a say at a public hearing, city council decided Tuesday. The issue is finding a balance between recognizing and encouraging philanthropy and acknowledging public investment in the city-owned building, according to the city.

The Vancouver East Cultural Centre, which operates the theatre, relies on sponsorships to keep its doors open. But the city spent $13 million to restore the 365-seat, 100-year-old theatre that re-opened in December after sitting empty for 13 years. Canadian Heritage also wrote a cheque for $1.8 million.

Coun. Andrea Reimer expressed concerns about the corporatization of city streets. EMILY JACKSON/METRO

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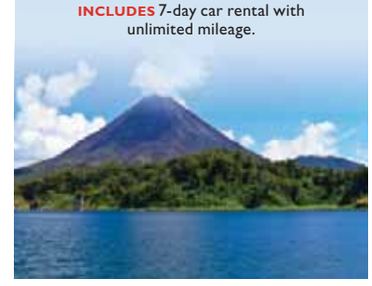

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Operation Keep Safe. Cops launch program to fight theft of disabled's vehicles

Vancouver police introduced a new program, Operation Keep Safe, Tuesday, focused on reducing theft of specialized cars for people with disabilities.

"If my vehicle is stolen, I could perhaps go rent a vehicle, I could hop on a SkyTrain, I could have other alternative methods of transportation," said Deputy Chief Adam Palmer. "For somebody that is physically disabled, it's much more difficult … it has a huge impact on their life."

The police department is offering a free vehicle immobilizer, a small electronic anti-theft device that will be installed free of charge for anyone who uses a car or van with equipment like wheelchair lifts or steering-wheel hand controls. The device ensures the car can't be started without the key.

Palmer said the installation and the device for the program will cost about $150 for each car. He estimated that 50 to 75 vehicles would be eligible for the operation.

Terry LeBlanc, a Spinal Cord Injury BC Peer member, had his 1990 Chrysler minivan installed with the equipment. "It's a great program, I'm very thankful for it," he said.

LeBlanc added, "I've had friends who have had their vehicles stolen and it really leaves you in a tough spot," he said. SINDHU DHARMARAJAH/METRO

Details

- The Vancouver Police Department partnered with ICBC to launch Operation Keep Safe
- The equipment in the specialized adaptive vehicles costs an average of $45,000.
- To install an immobilizer, call the Auto Crime Enforcement unit at (604) 717-2842/3231.

OK grizzlies, let's all play the Mating Game

Ursine sexy time.

Threatened B.C. bears to benefit from nature conservancy's passage to passion

It will now be easier for a threatened population of southeastern British Columbia grizzly bears to find new mates with a larger grizzly population to the east.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada has added 150 hectares to a conservation corridor that runs through the Creston Valley, making a safer passage for the South Selkirk species of grizzly as the bears move through the Selkirk and Purcell mountains.

The so-called Frog Bear Conservation Corridor will also benefit the northern leopard frog in the only known breeding location in B.C. for the endangered amphibian.

The cost of conserving two parcels of land is $1.4 million, and includes property that will serve as a gateway for bears moving down from the mountains.

One of the parcels of forested land was purchased from Wynndel Box and Lumber, based in Creston, B.C., and is adjacent to the Creston Valley Wildlife Management Area.

A second 85-hectare property is in the valley bottom and will continue to be used for agriculture.

The conservancy's Nancy Newhouse said researchers have mapped out the movements of the bears through the valley and know the corridor is vital for the prospects of the South Selkirk grizzly population.

Quoted

"Providing for wildlife connectivity through human environments has become the issue of our times, here in southern B.C. and around the world."

Michael Proctor, grizzly bear biologist

"The Creston Valley is an incredible hot spot for conservation," Newhouse said.

Experts say connecting the two populations of bears is considered critical for their long term prospects allowing the at-risk grizzlies to find new mates.

The corridor is also expected to reduce human-bear conflict.

"Providing for wildlife connectivity through human environments has become the issue of our times, here in southern B.C. and around the world," grizzly bear biologist Michael Proctor said in a news release.

"Enabling grizzly bears and other species to be inter-connected between mountain ranges and across regions might be the single best thing we can do to provide options for species, ecosystems and nature to adapt to climate change."

Several other rare species have also been documented in the Creston Valley, including the northern rubber boa snake, and birds like the great blue heron, American bittern and western screech-owl. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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2010 photo, a grizzly bear fishes along a river in Tweedsmuir Provincial Park near Bella Coola. It will now be easier for a threatened population of southeastern B.C. grizzly to find new mates, with a larger grizzly population to the east. JONATHAN HAYWARD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lord Strathcona.
School set to receive $25.6M seismic upgrade

The provincial government shook things up in Vancouver on Tuesday, announcing Lord Strathcona Elementary is finally getting some much-need seismic upgrades.

Originally constructed in 1891, the school has been deemed high-risk and in need of upgrades by the Vancouver School Board since 2005.

But after years of parent letters, petitions and Opposition support, Education Minister Peter Fassbender announced Tuesday that the school is getting a $25.6-million seismic upgrade.

"It is one of the oldest elementary schools in B.C. and has served as an important neighbourhood focus point for over 122 years," said Fassbender in a statement. "With this upgrade and a new Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Lord Strathcona will continue to serve students and the community for decades to come."

Three of the school's five buildings will be upgraded — one built in 1972 is still structurally sound, and the fifth won't be needed once upgrades are complete.

Four of the buildings have heritage designation from the city.

The upgraded school will accommodate up to 510 students.

To date, the provincial government has completed 133 seismic projects since 2001. MATT KIELTYKA/METRO

Quoted

"With this upgrade and a new Neighbourhood Learning Centre, Lord Strathcona will continue to serve students and the community for decades to come."

Education Minister Peter Fassbender

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Reporter rejects Ford's 'apology'

Defamation.
Toronto mayor's statement not enough to halt lawsuit

Rob Ford's apology Tuesday for his televised comments about Daniel Dale failed to satisfy the Toronto Star reporter, who said he is going ahead with a defamation lawsuit against the Toronto mayor.

Ford read a statement in council saying he didn't intend to suggest Dale is a pedophile during a televised interview with Conrad Black.

"I never called Mr. Dale a pedophile," Ford said. "I have never used that word to describe Mr. Dale. I do not believe Mr. Dale is a pedophile nor did I intend to suggest that in my comments."

Ford said he apologizes if his "actual words" have caused Dale any harm or personal offence. The mayor called it "unfortunate" that a word he never said has been "ascribed" to him by the media.

Those remarks come a week after Ford initially said he stood by every word of the interview.

Dale served Ford last week with a libel notice, demanding the mayor retract all of his false claims about what happened during an incident near Ford's house in May 2012.

Hours after Ford read his statement, Dale issued one of his own on Twitter, saying Ford's apology didn't even come close to what he sought.

"In his 'apology,' the mayor didn't retract anything at all," Dale wrote. "Instead, he blamed the media for its reasonable interpretation of his words."

During the interview with Black, which aired Dec. 9 on VisionTV, Ford claimed that Dale was in his backyard, "taking pictures of little kids."

"I don't want to say that word, but you start thinking what this guy is all about," Ford said.

If pedophile wasn't "that word," then someone should ask Ford what word he was suggesting, Dale said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

The reluctant apologist

Toronto Mayor Rob Ford has been forced to apologize for various behaviours and off-colour or insulting remarks since the so-called crack video scandal broke in May.

Dec. 17:
Reluctantly apologized for suggesting members of council were "corrupt." He initially withdrew his comments, but speaker Frances Nunziata said he needed to apologize.

Nov. 18:
Apologizes for running into Coun. Pam McConnell and knocking her over during a council meeting to strip the mayor of most of his powers.

Nov. 14:
Apologizes for crude remarks he made earlier that day in which he denied offering a former female staffer oral sex, saying he had "more than enough to eat at home."

Nov. 8:
Appears ashamed while delivering a statement in response to a video that surfaced of a rambling, enraged Ford in a profanity-laced tirade in which he threatens to kill someone.

Nov. 5:
Apologizes after admitting he had indeed smoked crack cocaine, likely in one of his drunken stupors.

Nov. 3:
Apologizes on his now-cancelled radio show for making mistakes including appearing in public while "hammered" and texting while driving.

May 27:
Apologizes to reporters for calling them a "bunch of maggots" during his radio show.

Toronto Mayor Rob Ford looks up to the press gallery as he concludes reading an apology to Toronto Star reporter Daniel Dale on Tuesday.
DAVID COOPER/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Hollywood gets cold shoulder

Newfoundland. Philanthropist, actress attempt to deliver $1M cheque as an incentive to stop the seal hunt

Actress Pamela Anderson and Sam Simon, producer of The Simpsons, talk to media outside the Canadian Sealers Association in St. John's, N.L., Tuesday. They attempted to deliver to the association a letter with a $1-million cheque to help end the annual commercial seal hunt, but the office remained closed. PAUL DALY/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Actress Pamela Anderson and a co-creator of The Simpsons received a frosty reception in St. John's, N.L., on Tuesday as they tried to present a $1-million incentive to help end the East Coast seal hunt.

Members of the Fish, Food and Allied Workers union, representing sealers, shouted questions at Anderson and Sam Simon during a chaotic news conference outside the office of the Canadian Sealers Association.

Simon offered a giant $1-million cheque to the Canadian Sealers Association and said his intention is to respectfully encourage governments to legislate an end to seal licences while protecting aboriginal hunts.

In a letter dated Tuesday to Eldred Woodford, president of the Canadian Sealers Association, Simon said he's making the offer after the World Trade Organization upheld Europe's ban on imported seal products.

A dispute settlement panel said last month that aspects of the embargo undermine fair trade but can be justified on "public moral concerns" for animal welfare.

"With bans firmly in place across Europe, Russia, the U.S., and other countries, the writing is on the wall," says the letter.

"The seal trade is finished. Leaders as diverse as President Obama and Vladimir Putin embrace this change, yet Canadian politicians remain too timid to initiate a buyout for fear of upsetting swing voters in Eastern Canada."

The association's office was closed and no one from the association was present.

Ottawa and the provincial government announced they'll spend almost $500,000 on a joint pilot project to offer seal meat at stores in Canada and overseas in the new year. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Rob Ford, royal baby and twerking. Google reveals year's top search terms

After dissecting the more than 40 billion queries submitted throughout 2013, Google Canada has declared Toronto's notorious Mayor Rob Ford as search term of the year.

While Facebook was the absolute top search of the year — as it has been for several years running — Ford topped Google's so-called trending list, representing the search terms that stood out most compared to previous web history.

Ford was followed by the late Glee actor Cory Monteith, who died of an overdose in July; Fast and Furious actor Paul Walker, who was killed in a car crash last month; murder victim Tim Bosma; and the Boston marathon.

Nelson Mandela, royal baby, North Korea, the Harlem Shake dance craze and Lac-Mégantic rounded out the Top 10 list.

One of the most interesting annual lists Google releases is a countdown of trending "what is" searches, which reveals what topics web searchers were keen to learn more about.

Miley Cyrus "twerking" on stage with Robin Thicke during the 2013 MTV Video Music Awards in New York City. NEILSON BARNARD/GETTY IMAGES

"What is twerking" topped the list, and the provocative dance was also the No. 1 "how to" search. Fracking was second on the "what is" list, followed by ricin, bbm, molly, bitcoin, Monsanto, Snapchat, EPO and DOMA.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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PHILIPPINES365

UNICEF Canada 365 days for Philippines funds will be directed towards programs for children and families affected by Typhoon Haiyan for 12 months. After 12 months of support, your monthly donation will switch over to where the need is greatest for all children. You are free to modify or cancel your monthly donation at any time by contacting UNICEF Canada by phone or email. All monthly donations are tax receipted annually. *Individual monthly gift sign ups before Dec 23rd will qualify for Government of Canada donation matching.

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Workers try to release two bodies trapped in the rubble of the collapsed Rana Plaza garment factory building near Dhaka, Bangladesh, on April 30. More than 1,100 garment workers were killed in the factory collapse. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

Will factory collapse have a lasting impact?

Labour conditions. Bangladesh tragedy has led to some reforms, but effect on shoppers still remains to be seen

The world's worst garment industry accident had ripple effects beyond Bangladesh in 2013, as the fatal building collapse turned a lens on poor conditions endured by workers and brought fresh focus to production practices used to create affordable goods.

More than 1,100 people died in the April 24 tragedy at the illegally constructed Rana Plaza. Items created for Canadian label Joe Fresh were among those manufactured on-site, but a number of other clothing makers were also housed in the complex.

Joe Fresh brand owner Loblaw Companies Ltd. joined several retailers in signing a pact to improve fire and building safety in Bangladesh. In October, the company said it would provide short-term financial support to all workers or dependents of New Wave Style (which produced Joe Fresh items) and plans to join with Irish retailer Primark to provide financial assistance to workers of all retailers in the factory plaza.

While there have been corporate reforms in the aftermath of the tragic incident, whether there will be a long-term impact on how consumers shop remains uncertain.

"Ultimately, what it's going to come down to is that industry needs to make these changes so that consumers can still shop with the convenience and the ease that they're used to — just knowing that the brands that they're buying from have cleaned up their act — and that they're making their clothes in an ethical environment," said Kelly Drennan, founder of Fashion Takes Action, a Canadian non-profit focused on sustainability within the fashion industry.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Quoted

"It's chicken and egg. Are consumers going to change the way they shop and then that's going to dictate if industry changes?" Kelly Drennan, founder of Fashion Takes Action

77,000

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Workers clear debris and decontaminate the soil earlier this month on the main street of Lac-Mégantic, Que., months after an oil tanker train exploded and burned part of the downtown in July. PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lac-Mégantic residents rebuilding their town

Healing process.
A team of 11 grief counsellors stays busy providing individual and group therapy

Staring at the spot where her sister's bed once stood, all she could make out amid the ash was a nest of mattress springs gnarled by the intense heat.

Louise Boulet said the building that housed younger sister Marie-France's home had burned to the foundation shortly after a runaway train carrying volatile crude oil roared into her Quebec town of Lac-Mégantic.

The tanker wagons bounced off the tracks in July and erupted in a series of powerful explosions, razing part of Lac-Mégantic's core and killing 47 people in the middle of the night.

Marie-France Boulet, 62, was among the victims, though officials could not positively identify her remains. With 2013 coming to a close, the Boulet family, like so many in the region, are working to rebuild their lives and their town following a disaster that grabbed the world's attention.

Since the July 6 crash, millions of dollars in government funding has been pledged for the massive environmental cleanup and reconstruction; blueprints have been sketched for a new downtown; and discussions are underway to see whether the tracks can eventually be re-routed outside of railway-dependent Lac-Mégantic. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lac-Mégantic

Rail traffic set to resume

Smoke rises from railway cars in downtown Lac-Mégantic, Que., on July 6. THE CANADIAN PRESS

The tracks have been repaired and trains are set to roll through Lac-Mégantic on Wednesday, five months after a runaway train carrying crude oil derailed, exploded and killed 47 people.

The town was built on the railroad, which remains a vital component for local industry and the economy.

The insolvent company at the centre of the disaster — Montreal, Maine & Atlantic Railway Ltd. — is expected to be sold in the coming weeks. Following the July derailment, MMA announced it would stop transporting crude oil on the rail line.

Mayor Colette Roy-Laroche, however, is concerned that the next owner could eventually resume cash-generating oil shipments through town, cargo that would raise concerns among many locals. She said the municipality is examining its options to prevent it from happening.

The MMA and petroleum-logistics companies connected to the oil that exploded in Lac-Mégantic are facing lawsuits on both sides of the border for the disaster.

Last week, a warrant was granted to allow Transport Canada to search Irving Oil's office in Saint John, N.B. The train was loaded with oil destined for Irving's refinery in Saint John. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Vote for Goodness

We've been searching for goodness. Here are 5 stories of genuinely good Canadians making a difference in their communities. Have a read. Then vote online for the story you'd like us to share in our next TV ad.

Ethan
St. Catharines, ON

Sometimes, good things come in small packages. Ethan, a Pee-Wee hockey player from St. Catharines, ON, has been collecting used hockey equipment since 2009 and distributing it to underprivileged hockey players throughout Ontario and around the world.

George
Oliver, BC

Wherever help is needed in Oliver, BC, you'll find George. He spends his life spreading goodness in so many ways, but what's really special is the time and effort he devotes to growing fresh vegetables for others. Last year, he donated 1800lbs of veggies to the food bank.

Sharon
Brandon, MB

One person can fill an entire community with goodness. Sharon, from Brandon, MB, is in her retirement years, but she still works 5 days a week at her local soup kitchen. There by 6 a.m. every morning, she tirelessly cooks hot meals for 125-150 people from all walks of life.

Julia and Emma
Oakville, ON

Goodness runs in their family. Teen sisters Julia and Emma from Oakville, ON made it their mission to collect books for remote "fly-in" communities in Northern Ontario. Their charity Books With No Bounds has collected and distributed over 27,000 books.

Coby
North York, ON

This story proves that you can always make time to spread goodness. Coby leads a busy life in North York, ON, but he regularly visits a long-term home for the elderly. Through the joy of music and song, he, and a group of volunteers from The House, bring smiles and a little human tenderness to the aged.

Vote at searchforgoodness.ca

Voting period ends on January 03, 2014 at 11:59 AM ET. Limit of one vote per person per day. See www.facebook.com/shreddies for details.

Murder trial. Knox declares innocence in email to Italian court

Amanda Knox declared her innocence in her roommate's 2007 murder in a highly unusual email Tuesday to the Italian court hearing the case against her. The former U.S. exchange student also said she was staying away from the trial out of fear of being wrongly convicted.

"I didn't kill. I didn't rape. I didn't rob. I didn't plot. I didn't instigate. I didn't kill Meredith," Knox wrote.

Presiding Judge Alessandro Nencini read the five-page email written in Italian into the court record. He noted that the email, presented by Knox's lawyers before their closing arguments, was not a normal procedure in Italy. He said it highlighted Knox's absence and indicated it did not have the same legal standing as a declaration made in person.

Knox explained her absence was out of fear that she would be wrongly convicted. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Scotland Yard

No evidence found tying SAS to death of Princess Diana

London's police force said Tuesday there is "no credible evidence" that British special forces were involved in the deaths of Princess Diana and her boyfriend, Dodi Fayed, and it will not reopen the investigation.

Scotland Yard has been looking into claims that the SAS had played a role.

The claims, widely reported in the British media, were made by an ex-SAS member identified only as Soldier N.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Putin offers Ukraine $15B bailout, cheap gas

Passageway. Ukraine serves as a key conduit for Russian natural gas exports to Europe

Pro-European Union activists gather during a rally in Independence Square in Kyiv, Ukraine, on Tuesday.
EFREM LUKATSKY/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday opened his wallet in the battle with the European Union over Ukraine's future, saying Moscow will buy $15 billion worth of Ukrainian government bonds and sharply cut the price of natural gas for its economically struggling neighbour.

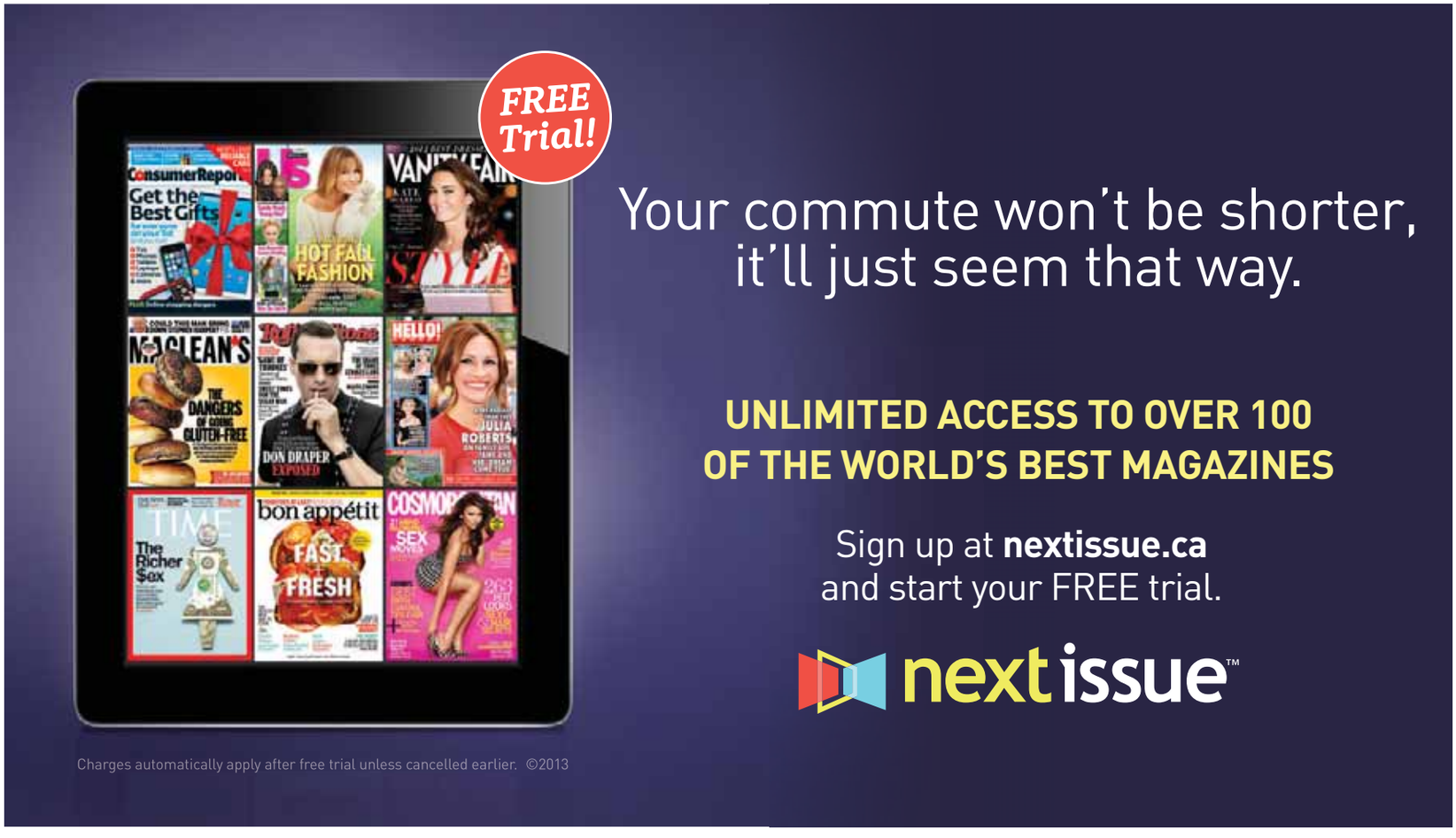
The announcements came after Putin held talks in Moscow with Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych, who is facing massive protests at home for his decision to shelve a pact with the EU in favour of closer ties with Moscow. Russia's bailout package angered protesters, who immediately accused Yanukovych of selling out the country to the Kremlin.

Washington said the Kremlin agreements would not address concerns of the demonstrators in Kyiv, and German Chancellor Angela Merkel dismissed what she described as a "bidding competition" over Ukraine.

Putin's move came as Ukraine said it desperately needs to get at least $10 billion in the coming months to avoid bankruptcy. The Fitch ratings agency has given Ukraine's bonds a B-minus rating, which puts them in "junk bond" territory.

Putin sought to calm protesters in Kyiv by saying he and Yanukovych didn't discuss the prospect of Ukraine joining a Moscow-dominated economic bloc they fear will pull their country closer into Russia's orbit.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS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Firefighters battle a major fire in downtown Kingston, Ont., Tuesday. LARS HAGBERG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dramatic rescue in Ontario firestorm

Worker trapped.
Helicopter used to save man stuck above massive blaze

In a dramatic rescue Tuesday that drew a gasping crowd, a military helicopter airlifted a worker trapped on a crane above a massive fire in Kingston, Ont.

Police said the crane operator suffered only minor injuries after being stranded when the blaze broke out around 2:15 p.m. at an apartment building that was under construction.

John Ashie was working at his family's car dealership down the street when his father asked him about the black smoke that was rising above the neighbourhood.

The 22-year-old stepped onto the street just in time to see bright orange flames burst through the roof of the five-storey apartment complex.

"Thirty seconds went by and then the whole top was up in flames," Ashie said. "It seemed kind of out of control at that point, by the time the first fire truck got there."

Not long after, those who had gathered to watch fire officials battle the blaze noticed a figure perched atop a construction crane at the burning apartment complex.

There were a few anxious moments as those on the ground watched the fire continue to grow.

"As the flames started to get bigger and bigger and bigger, it started to get pretty worrisome," said Ashie. "He must have been going through hell up there."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

A helicopter rescues a crane operator during Tuesday's fire.
LARS HAGBERG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Facebook video ads may 'push people away'

Monetizing socializing.
Ads silently auto-playing in news feeds a hit with investors, but some users do not like the idea

Investors are giving a thumbs-up to the idea of Facebook making hundreds of millions in new revenue from video advertisements, but some users argue that the social network is already too cluttered and has become more about commercialism than communing with friends.

Facebook said Tuesday that it's testing video advertisements that show up in its users' news feeds. As part of the test, some of its users on Thursday will see a series of videos teasing an upcoming movie.

Thumbs down?

Video ads could be the "final straw" for young adults.

Jon Knott, a 22-year-old Facebook user, predicting the ads could be the straw that breaks the camel's back for some users.

While investors liked the idea, with Facebook's shares hitting an all-time high of $55.18 US on the news Tuesday, the reaction from users has been less positive.

Ben Wachtel, a 23-year-old and a Facebook user since high school, says he feels like he and his friends are using the social network less and less, as ads crowd out posts from real people. "If they add videos, especially auto play ones, it's just going to push people away."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Your news feed is about to get a bit more cluttered, with video ads. GETTY IMAGES

Replaces the late Larsson

New author to pen Girl With Dragon Tattoo sequel

The Swedish publisher of the bestselling The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo trilogy said Tuesday it has hired an author to write a sequel to the series by Stieg Larsson, who died in 2004.

Norstedts said it signed a contract with David Lagercrantz, the author of I Am Zlatan, a biography of Zlatan Ibrahimovic, the captain of Sweden's soccer team. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Market Minute

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TSX
13,180.09 (-4.32)

OIL
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GOLD
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Natural gas: $4.28 US (+$0.02)
Dow Jones: 15,875.26 (-9.31)

Smile, Siam Paragon mall, you're No.1 on Instagram!

Will she be posting that pic of an aquatic animal display at Siam Ocean World in Siam Paragon shopping mall to Instagram? Sure, the Eiffel Tower, the Taj Mahal and the Grand Canyon are picturesque. But the luxury mall in the heart of Bangkok has claimed this year's crown as the world's most photographed location on Instagram in 2013, says the photo-sharing app. It edged out No. 2 Times Square and No. 3 Disneyland in California, as well as New York's Central Park and Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. SAKCHAI LALIT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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'TIS THE SEASON FOR GIVING

JUST SAYIN'

Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

By the time you read this, someone could be at least $636 million richer.

That's the U.S. Mega Millions jackpot, which was drawn last night. If nobody wins, the next draw will be Friday, and the prize will approach $1 billion, which is so ridiculous, it's hard to type.

Of course, Uncle Sam gets his half right off the top, but that will still be a cool half-billion after taxes.

Buried somewhere in the fine print are the odds, which are only about one in 259 million. But somebody has to win eventually, and it won't be you if you don't buy a ticket.

Canadians are eligible to buy a Mega Millions ticket, but only if they cross-border shop to do it. So when you're shopping for cheese or cheap gas, don't forget your one-in-259-million chance to join the one per cent overnight.

I wonder if the latest Mega Millionaire will follow the example of Calgarian Tom Crist, who won $40 million in the Lotto Max recently, then decided to give it all away to charity to commemorate his wife, who died of lung cancer two years ago.

Tom says he's already financially secure thanks to his successful business and he doesn't need the money. But I imagine it's not easy to give away 40 million bucks, never mind 600 zillion.

Tom's story is particularly compelling because this is the season of giving and he sets the bar pretty high. Even the post-ghost Ebenezer Scrooge looks like a piker in comparison.

For years now, my wife has been dutifully buying lottery tickets while I scoff and snort in a nearby dark corner. Just as dutifully, she lists all the people she will help when she wins $40 million or whatever. And as much as I ridicule the whole process as pointless, it's not long before I start worrying how we're going to afford the villa on the Riviera while fighting cancer and paying off the mortgages of various friends and relatives.

And then, I remember:

1. It's her ticket. If I want the villa on the Riviera, I can buy my own ticket.

2. The odds of winning Lotto Max aren't quite one in 259 million, but I'm more likely to be hit by lightning, and how many times has that happened, touch wood? So what am I going on about?

3. Whatever happened to my generosity of spirit? It's pretty bad when I can't even imagine giving it away.

So thanks, Tom Crist. With the Spirit of Crist-mas present, you've inspired me to go out, buy a lottery ticket and think about giving it all away. If no one has claimed the Mega Millions prize after last night's draw, I may even head for the border and buy a ticket so I can imagine giving $600 zillion away. What joy! Of course, there's no chance I'll actually win anything, is there?

So don't get too excited out there.

ZOOM

Carnivorous plant pic wins award

A picture of a meat-eating water plant has won this year's Olympus BioScapes International Digital Imaging Competition. Polish-born biologist Igor Siwanowicz's photo shows the inside of an open trap of aquatic carnivorous plant, the humped bladderwort (utricularia gibba), which digests micro invertebrates sucked into its trap. METRO

IGOR SIWANOWICZ/2013 OLYMPUS BIOSCAPES INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL IMAGING COMPETITION

Q and A

An underwater hunter

IGOR SIWANOWICZ
Biologist, 37, from Krakow, Poland, based in Ashburn, Va.

How does it catch its prey?
Antenna-like 'trigger hairs' guide an aquatic arthropod toward the trapdoor. Touching a hair causes the entrance to bulge inward. The plant's walls rapidly spring back to their initial position and the prey is sucked in within a millisecond!

It looks like a sort of bizarre, otherworldly vessel.
Yes, like an alien treasure stash! Honestly, if I tried I couldn't have planned this image to turn out this way. This photograph stands as a salute to nature's ingenuity.

Clickbait

LUKE SIMCOE
Metro Online

It's a familiar refrain: An app debuts, gets popular and then gets banned from either the iTunes store or the Google Play store for violating our mobile overlords' terms of service. In the case of Apple, banning an app from iTunes effectively kills it (unless you're willing to jailbreak your phone), but Android's relative openness allows for side-loading apps. So, for all you Android users out there, here are some of the best of the banned:

CONTRIBUTED

Falcon Pro (getfalcon.pro):
Arguably one of the best Twitter clients for Android, Falcon Pro vanished from the Play store last summer. To be fair, it wasn't Google's doing, but rather Twitter's. The company's user limit for third-party clients — which some believe is an attempt to corral everyone into the official app — kiboshed Falcon for new users. Fortunately, you can still install the app, and a little Googling will show you how to circumvent Twitter's limit.

CyanogenMod (cyanogenmod.org):
CyanogenMod is a user-created alternative to stock Android. It's the most popular Android remix on the market, and allows users get the latest version of the OS if their manufacturer hasn't released an update. An easy-to-use installer for CyanogenMod was booted from the Play store in November but can still be found online. Be warned, as Google claims installing CyanogenMod can void your warranty.

Amazon Appstore (amazon.com/getappstore):
Google may not always be evil, but they do hate competition. Intended for Kindle users, the Amazon Appstore contains many of the same apps as the official Play store, and also offers regular sales and freebies. Fortunately, the app is still available via Amazon's website.

Comments

RE: The Vomit Face, The Dislike And The Nobody Cares: Facebook Buttons We'd 'Like', says Metro's Jessica Napier, published Dec. 17

@debbiepalm44: Twitter needs them too!

@luxembourg5: OK, the facebook buttons sound great, but enough already about trashing Rob Ford~~it gets boring.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU: Send us your comments: vancouverletters@metronews.ca

metro

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SCENE 2

Hollywood's in for the long con

American Hustle. Bale's latest role has him playing a con artist who helps the FBI, but with this genre, it's a con that's been seen before

IN FOCUS
Richard Crouse
scene@metronews.ca

Amy Adams and Christian Bale star in American Hustle, which opens this weekend. HANDOUT

"You're a con artist," wrote Karina Halle in Sins & Needles. "A liar. A thief. An unredeemable soul."

She might also have added to that colourful list really interesting movie character.

As despicable as flim flam artists may be, there is no denying they make good film subjects.

This weekend in American Hustle, Christian Bale plays Irving Rosenfeld, a con man forced to help the FBI ensnare a group of corrupt politicians in the ABSCAM sting operation.

Although American Hustle director David O. Russell says his film is a fictionalized account of events, the ABSCAM operation was headline news in the early 1980s and Hollywood took notice.

In 1982 director Louis Malle was making plans for a May start date on an ABSCAM film called Moon Over Miami starring Dan Aykroyd and John Belushi. Belushi was to play Melvin Weinberg, based on the same man as Bale's character in American Hustle. The movie was scuttled following Belushi's death in March of that year.

That con man film never saw the light of day, but many others have.

Everyone knows The Sting and The Grifters, but lesser seen is David Mamet's The Spanish Prisoner, a complicated story starring Campbell Scott as Joe Ross, a man who invents a process "to control the world market." Concerned that he will not be properly compensated for his work he contacts Jimmy Dell (Steve Martin), a wealthy businessman who offers to help. Little does Ross know that he has just stepped into a world of deception that will change his life.

Steve Martin's performance in The Spanish Prisoner was Oscar worthy, but it wasn't the first time he played a confidence man on film.

In the comedy Dirty Rotten Scoundrels he starred opposite Michael Caine as a scruffy con man trying to muscle in on some high end business on the French Riviera. Caine's suave grifter makes a bet with Martin. Whoever can con Soap Queen Janet Colgate (Glenne Headley) first will walk away with $50,000.

The movie was written for Mick Jagger and David Bowie who were looking to do a project together after the success of their Dancing in the Street video.

The rock stars dropped out before cameras rolled — Bowie later said both were, "a bit tweezed that we lost out on a script that could have been reasonably good" — and replaced by Martin and Caine whose hilarious performances earned the movie a spot on Bravo's 100 Funniest Movies list.

Movie review

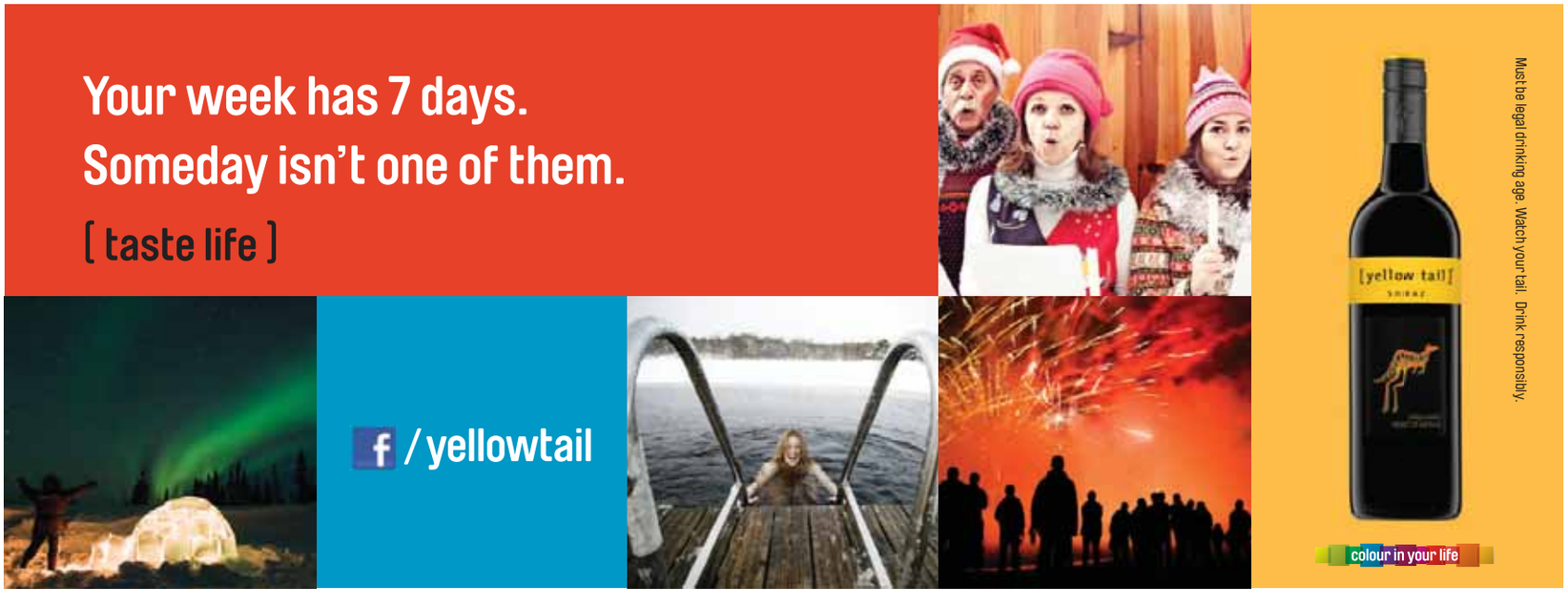
Stay classy Will Ferrell

Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues

Stars. Will Ferrell, Steve Carell

Anchorman 2 may not be as classy (or as funny) as its 2004 progenitor but it's definitely more outrageous. For better or worse, star and co-writer Will Ferrell clearly had free rein with a foolish fable of the hapless broadcaster taking on the televised origin of 24-hour news. Ferrell and his star-studded cast will surely earn laughs — even if the sequel falls short of the original's cohesion.

STEVE GOW/METRO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METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Dylan Sprouse

Disney star lays out the bare truth on his pictures

Now that former Disney child star Dylan Sprouse has had time to think about his nude photo leak, he wants everyone to calm down.

"The reason I'm making light of the situation is because I don't think what I did was wrong," the 21-year-old writes on his Tumblr page. "I was proud of my progress in the gym, thought I looked hot and wanted to share it."

He just didn't mean to share it with the actual recipient of the photos.

"The real problem here was not me sending my pictures to someone, but rather sending them to the wrong someone," Sprouse writes.

Penélope Cruz

Penélope Cruz is a big fan of nursing

Penélope Cruz is not looking forward to when she has to stop breastfeeding her infant daughter, Luna — in case you were wondering.

"I was breastfeeding my son 13 months, and I plan to do the same with my daughter. (Nursing) is addictive," Cruz told Allure magazine recently.

"It's hard when the day comes when you have to stop."

The Word

Lil Wayne isn't dead, but the Internet is ready if he is

THE WORD
MELINDA TAUB
scene@metronews.ca

At this point, Lil Wayne is basically a superhero, given how many times he's come back from the dead.

Yet another Lil Wayne death rumour was making the rounds on Facebook Tuesday. RIP Rapper Lil Wayne Found Dead, the video reads, before prompting the user to share it before viewing. Not to worry, though — the rapper is alive and well.

It's not clear where this latest rumour springs from (the Inquisitr speculates it could be a Facebook data harvesting scam, since you have to share the video to view it), but it's far from the first time death rumours have swirled around the rapper. The most credible was this summer, when he was hospitalized for seizures and TMZ reported that he was on his deathbed. However, he recovered.

Why is Lil Wayne such a frequent target of death rumours? Maybe because his real health problems make them quasi-credible. The rapper is epileptic, which is what landed him in the hospital this summer.

"It got real bad because I got three (seizures) in a row, and on the third one my heart rate went down to, like, 30 per cent," he said in a radio interview with Power 106. "Basically, I could've died soon. That's why it was so serious."

I guess he can take some comfort in knowing that if (God forbid) anything ever does happen to him, the Internet has a bunch of In Memoriam videos all ready to go.

Beyoncé. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Beyoncé's new album won't hit the Target

It seems not everyone enjoyed the surprise Beyoncé pulled off with her latest album, which debuted online last week with no prior notice. Retail chain Target, in fact, is refusing to carry the album, according to Billboard.

"At Target we focus on offering our guests a wide assortment of physical CDs, and when a new album is available digitally before it is available physically, it impacts demand and sales projections," a spokeswoman for the chain says. "While there are many aspects that contribute to our approach and we have appreciated partnering with Beyoncé in the past, we are primarily focused on offering CDs that will be available in a physical format at the same time as all other formats. At this time, Target will not be carrying Beyoncé's new self-titled album Beyoncé."

Jason Bateman

Bateman urges Aniston to get married

Jennifer Aniston and Justin Theroux have been getting some well-intentioned pressure to just go ahead and tie the knot already from someone very close to them: good friend Jason Bateman.

"Jason has been one of the biggest cheerleaders for Justin to pull the trigger and marry Jen," a source tells Radar Online.

"Jen has had her own trepidations, too, after her marriage to Brad Pitt failed. But Jason loves both of them to pieces and as a longtime married father of two himself, he's a better example of how to achieve personal happiness in Hollywood."

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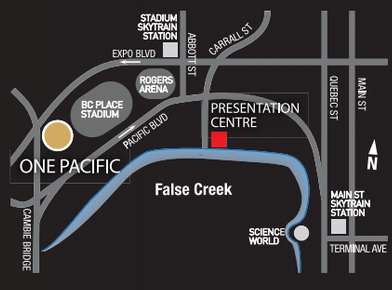

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CONCORD PACIFIC

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!
If all this white stuff make visions of mogul bumps dance in your head, here are a few exciting developments you should know about for the 2013-2014 ski season.

ON THE MOVE
Loren Christie
life@metronews.ca

5 Perks for powder hounds

Rossland's Red Mountain

Just in time for the 2013/2014 ski season, Red Mountain Resort in Rossland, British Columbia has completed the largest expansion of any ski resort in North America in more than four decades. The development of Grey Mountain means an additional 1,000 acres of mostly intermediate terrain to the existing resort. Part of BC's renowned Powder Highway, Red is a two and a half hour drive from Spokane, Washington and three hours from Kelowna.

Cat tracks and snowshoes

Alberta's Fortress Mountain was closed as a ski resort in 2006. Over the last three years, KPOW (Kananaskis Powder) skiing at Fortress Mountain has brought a cat skiing operation back to sections of the mountain. Ski leaders will tour and teach anyone wanting to take advantage of the eight to 11 metres of annual snowfall. New this year, KPOW is partnering with White Mountain Adventures to offer snowshoeing at Fortress Mountain.

Brand new trails at Blue!

Ontario's premier ski resort, Blue Mountain, has added an additional 64 acres with its Orchard Expansion, which includes six new trails and the latest high-speed chairlift system to get you there. Their lift rate specials are on designated weeks from January to March, but for those spontaneous, flexible souls, Blue Mountain offers a last-minute Hot Deals club that includes the full gamut of accommodations.

Happy 75th Tremblant!

Quebec's Mont Tremblant is turning 75 this year. As part of the anniversary celebrations, the resort has invested $5 million into The Westin Resort & Spa Tremblant and renovated a number of boutiques and restaurants in the resorts' charming village. The mountain is featuring a long lineup of events throughout the winter including its traditional New Year's Eve party, the official 75th anniversary spring celebrations, the must-attend Caribou Cup, and a new Red Bull signature event that extends over four weekends from March 29 to April 19.

Ski — then stay at La Ferme

If you are planning to hit the slopes of Le Massif de Charlevoix this winter, avoid the 45 minute commute back and forth between Quebec City and stay at the Hôtel La Ferme. Constructed out of an old dairy farm in the middle of a field in Baie-Saint- Paul, this charming hotel is connecting by rail to the ski hills. From the hotel's lobby, skiers can walk into the train station, choose a take-out lunch, hop on the rail shuttle with their skis and get off right at the foot of trails.

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New Mexico mixes up holiday celebrations

Festive twist. The state's cultural mix makes for some unique seasonal events

No matter when you visit New Mexico, the state's cultural mix is part of the appeal. Spanish colonial history, Native traditions and Anglo and Mexican influences are seen year-round in everything from architecture to food. But the Christmas season offers additional ways to experience this unique heritage.

Hallmarks of the holiday include the luminaria and farolito traditions. These candles, usually placed in paper bags weighted with sand, look like lanterns and are carried in nighttime processions or lined up along streets, driveways or rooftops to create a display. Luminaria can also refer to a bonfire, while the term farolito is more likely to be heard in Santa Fe and Northern New Mexico than in Albuquerque.

And while fir, balsam and pine perfume the air at Christmas in other parts of the country, here it's the scent of burning juniper and pinon.

Many places in New Mexico host annual events Christmas Eve and Christmas Day centred around the luminaria tradition. The main plazas of both Albuquerque and Santa Fe are decorated with thousands of luminarias.

Albuquerque offers walking tours of luminaria displays on Christmas Eve while Santa Fe hosts a procession called Las Posadas, which tells the story of Jesus. Spectators gather with candles in the city's historic plaza to watch the parade, which is followed by a Christmas at the Palace event at Santa Fe's Palace of the Governors. This event includes Hispanic, Anglo and Native traditions, from caroling to Native dances to an appearance by Santa and Mrs. Claus. Midnight Christmas Mass is held at the nearby Cathedral Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi.

In Santa Fe's Canyon Road area, known for art galleries and studios, there's also a farolito walk on Christmas Eve, with businesses around the neighbourhood offering hot cider, hot chocolate and posole, a hearty soup that's traditional around Christmas.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Also in Albuquerque

The River of Lights runs through Dec. 19 at the BioPark Zoo and Botanic Gardens, with a walk-through lighting display and entertainment.

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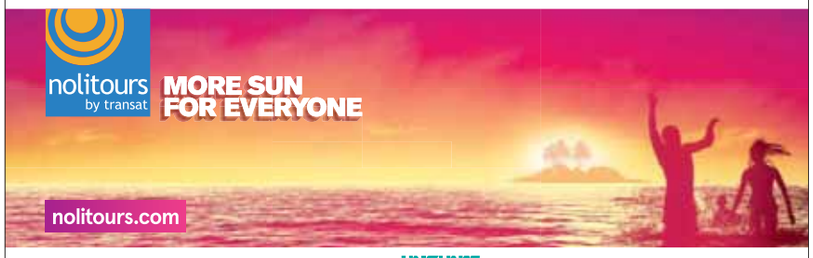

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Chestnuts roasting on an open fire? They'd be happier in these truffles

Who doesn't love chocolate truffles? They are the essence of chocolate, and a sure-fire mood enhancer. Pop even one into your mouth and see if you don't get happy.

1. In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine the chestnuts and water. Bring to boil, then reduce heat to maintain a simmer, cover and cook until the chestnuts are very tender and all the water has been absorbed, about 30 minutes.

2. Add the milk and heat the mixture until it just comes to a simmer. Remove the pan from the heat, add the chocolate, then recover the pan. Let stand off the burner until the chocolate is melted, about 3 to 4 minutes. Stir and transfer to a blender along with the espresso powder, salt, corn syrup and liquor. Blend until very smooth.

3. Transfer to a bowl, cover tightly with plastic wrap and chill until very firm, at least 3 hours. Form the mixture into small balls (about 2 tsp each) and roll the balls in the cocoa powder until they are coated, shaking off the excess. Chill until ready to serve. Will keep, refrigerated, for 2 weeks.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/SARA MOULTON, AUTHOR OF SARA MOULTON'S EVERYDAY FAMILY DINNERS

Ingredients

- 5.2-oz pkg roasted and peeled chestnuts, medium chopped
- 3/4 cup water
- 1/3 cup low-fat evaporated milk
- 4 oz bittersweet chocolate, medium chopped
- 1 tsp instant espresso powder or 1 tbsp instant coffee
- Pinch of table salt
- 2 tbsp light corn syrup
- 2 tsp Tia Maria, Kahlua, Baileys, brandy or rum
- 1 tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder

Spiked Mocha Chestnut Truffles

This recipe makes 20 truffles. MATTHEW MEAD/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Drink of the Week

Peppermint Sapphire Splash

- 1 and 1/2 oz Bombay Sapphire
- 1/2 oz Martini Bianco
- 1 and 1/2 oz white cranberry juice
- 1/2 oz peppermint liqueur
- Frozen cranberries

Add all liquid ingredients into a shaker. Add ice and shake hard. Strain mixture into a cocktail glass leaving the ice chips in the glass. Garnish with frozen cranberries.

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Gifts for those you're still getting to know

This one's for you, stranger. What do you buy for the distant colleague whose name you picked out of a hat?

What do you know about your office acquittance, if anything, that might help in your holiday hunt. ISTOCK

Along with icy sidewalks and stale fruitcake, buying a gift for the person you had to secretly pick at the office is just one more hazard of the holiday season. So if you've got a Secret Santa emergency on your hands, here are some creative gift ideas from the Canadian bargain hunting website RedFlagDeals.com:

Office temp
This is often code for "overworked" or "underpaid." Skip the gag gifts and get something fun and enjoyable like movie passes or a mall gift card.

New person
It's hard to buy for someone if you barely know their name, so start by getting to know them. If they're always drinking coffee, put together a nice mug and a coffee shop gift certificate for the ultimate gift.

Receptionist
Skip the office supplies. Instead, treat them to a deluxe gift basket, a small spa package or a good book.

IT/help desk
Treat the people who fix your computer well. Something like a gift certificate to their favourite restaurant will work. If you want to be a bit more creative, observe what they decorate their desk with and get them something that fits in.

Executive
Giving a present to your boss or their boss can be awkward. Choose a meaningful gift instead of something fancy or expensive. Fun gifts like a framed photo from a work event or something to share, like gourmet cookies, are a safe bet.

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If you need some inspiration to get ahead, look to the big man in red

Is Santa the employee of the century? He checks his lists twice, he's got the nice thing down, what more can you ask for in a worker?

LEAH RUEHLICKE
TalentEgg.ca

Sure it looks like a lot to take on, but Santa's got a can-do attitude when it comes to all tasks, and so should you. ISTOCK

If you're planning on spending some of your holiday downtime on your job search, use the big man himself as someone to model your employable self after.

Not only has he been extremely successful in his career, but he consistently demonstrates a solid work ethic and embodies the qualities of an admirable worker.

Take a look at the top reasons Santa continues to excel year after year and stands strong as a model employee:

He achieves the impossible

He might be a large man, but he still manages to squeeze down even the tightest of chimneys.

What's your version of impossible? Changing industries, going back to school, getting a position that's outside of your experience?

Have a goal, put your mind to it, and you too can fit in places you never thought possible.

He has a can-do attitude

The whole 'getting around the entire world in one night' detail has stumped the public for centuries — to the point where people use this as the sole reason to stop believing in Santa Claus.

I know, I know.

Think you have too much on your plate? Have people telling you you're underqualified and not skilled enough for what you want to do? You can do anything you set your mind to — just ask Santa.

He asks for what he needs

Santa has one of the busiest jobs around. He has billions of people relying on him to gear up and deliver — literally.

He knows he can do it, but he also knows he might need a little help along the way.

Santa has no shame in asking for some milk and cookies to give him the energy he needs to power through.

If you feel like you don't have all the tools or training you need to most effectively do your job, speak up!

Your boss wants you to be productive — and if there's something you need help with in order to do just that, they should know about it.

He gives back

Santa never steals the spotlight, constantly paying recognition to his hardworking elves and reindeer: two very important pieces in the holiday puzzle. Santa couldn't be Santa without a team and he knows that.

Santa also engages. Write him a letter and he will write back! As we all know, so much of the job market nowadays is dependent on our social channels. Employers will look you up (or engage with you) on LinkedIn, Twitter and beyond. You want to make sure you're doing it right.

Don't make it all about you.

Don't endlessly push your own content without commenting or engaging with other posts as well. Share the spotlight and celebrate people who have helped you get to where you are.

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He follows the dress code

He follows the dress code

- It's easy to get too comfortable at a place of employment, or reach that point where you've been there long enough that you start trying to get away with more and more.
- Santa has been doing the same job for what likely feels like forever, yet his outfit never disappoints. After hundreds of years delivering toys across the globe, he still shows up in a suit. Every. Single. Year.
- Think like Santa and you too can ho-ho-hold your head high as a model employee.

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Canucks defenceman Dan Hamhuis shoves the Wild's Nino Niederreiter into Roberto Luongo as the goalie makes a save in St. Paul, Minn., on Tuesday night.
ANN HEISENFELT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wild end Canucks' winning streak at 7

NHL. Luongo improves upon last three outings in Minnesota but can't push his team to a shootout victory

On Tuesday

Wild	Canucks
3	2

Jason Pominville slipped a shot past Roberto Luongo's glove in the third round of a shootout to lift the Minnesota Wild to a 3-2 victory over Vancouver on Tuesday, ending the Canucks' winning streak at seven games.

Luongo made 30 saves, including 14 in the third period and overtime, and stopped Zach Parise to open the shootout. Mikko Koivu, who had two assists for a team-high 20 this season, hit the crossbar with his shot before Pominville scored. Ryan Kesler's last-chance attempt for the Canucks sailed wide right.

Josh Harding stopped shots by Mike Santorelli and Chris Higgins in the shootout and made 29 saves to win for the fifth time in his last six starts. The Wild improved to 14-3-2 at Xcel Energy Center, where Luongo fell to 3-9-3 in his career.

This was a lot better than he'd done in the past, but not quite enough to win.

Jannik Hansen and David Booth each scored for the second straight game for the Canucks, who won their first seven games this month by a 24-8 combined margin. Only one of those wins went past regulation.

The Wild improved to 12-2-5 in one-goal games this season.

Parise had an early goal for the Wild, and Charlie Coyle scored late — a snap shot that went between Luongo's legs to tie the game with 11:13 left in regulation.

Pulled from the last three games he started here, Luongo gave up a total of 16 goals on those forgettable nights.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CFL

Bellefeuille stays as Bombers' OC

The Winnipeg Blue Bombers are bringing back offensive co-ordinator Marcel Bellefeuille next season.

New Blue Bombers head coach Mike O'Shea announced Tuesday that Bellefeuille would return to run Winnipeg's offence. Bellefeuille finished off Winnipeg's disappointing 2013 season in that role after Gary Crowton was fired on Aug. 18 following a five-game losing streak.

While Winnipeg finished with a 3-15 record, the offence slowly began to take shape in the second half of the season behind quarterback Max Hall. THE CANADIAN PRESS

UFC

Rousey backs St-Pierre's decision to take leave

UFC champion (Rowdy) Ronda Rousey says Georges St-Pierre was right to leave mixed martial arts, if for no other reason than to preserve his health.

"We're not really doing nine to five or sitting down in a cubicle," the UFC's inaugural women's bantamweight champion said Tuesday. "If you fight for a living, you're fighting for your life every time you go in there. It's a stressful situation, if you think about it."

Rousey (7-0) noted that St-Pierre, with his controversial win last month over Johny (Bigg Rigg) Hendricks at UFC 167, had set a UFC total fight time record with five hours 28 minutes 12 seconds in the Octagon. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Dineen named Canadian women's head coach

Hockey Canada announced Kevin Dineen as the new head coach of the national women's team in Calgary on Tuesday. LARRY MACDOUGAL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Hockey. Former NHL bench boss takes over for resigned Church

With less than two months to go until the Sochi Olympics, Kevin Dineen will have to hit the ground running as the new head coach of the Canadian women's hockey team.

Dineen was named to the post Tuesday, just a few days after Dan Church's surprise resignation. Dineen was signed for the remainder of the season and will guide the defending champions at the Feb. 7-23 Winter Games.

"This has been a whirlwind few days, but when this opportunity presented itself I immediately jumped at it," Dineen said at a news conference.

It's the first international coaching job for Dineen, who served as head coach of the NHL's Florida Panthers for parts of three seasons until he was fired last month. He previously served as head coach of the AHL's Portland Pirates for six seasons (2005-11).

"We're very excited that Kevin will join the coaching staff of Canada's national women's team and bring his unique perspective to the dressing room," Hockey Canada chief operating officer Scott Smith said in a statement. "Kevin has had success in both the AHL and NHL, and we're looking forward to him being a part of the staff for the final push towards Sochi."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Up next

Canada lost 5-1 to the archrival United States in an exhibition game last Thursday in Calgary. The two women's hockey powers meet again Friday in an exhibition game in Grand Forks, N.D.

Luge. Canada names team tasked with ending drought

Alex Gough THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

World Championship and World Cup medallist Alex Gough and two-time Olympian Sam Edney will lead a promising Canadian luge team into the Sochi Games with the goal of bringing home the country's first Olympic medal in the sport.

The Canadian Luge Association officially named seven athletes to the 2014 Olympic team Tuesday. Edney leads teenagers John Fennell and Mitchel Malyk into their first Games in men's singles. Tristan Walker and Justin Snith will represent Canada in doubles, while Gough will be joined by Kimberley McRae in women's singles. Arianne Jones and Jordan Smith will race off in Calgary on Wednesday and Thursday for the final women's spot.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Snowboarding

White expects to return on weekend

Shaun White's balky left ankle apparently isn't going to keep the two-time Olympic gold medallist out of this weekend's World Cup event in Colorado.

White posted a picture of a halfpipe on his Facebook page on Tuesday. The picture included a message that read, "I am in the building" as an introduction.

White tweaked the ankle during his first run in the halfpipe finals of an event in Breckinridge, Colo., on Saturday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

ATLANTIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Boston	34	23	9	2	94	70	48
Montreal	36	21	12	3	91	76	45
Tampa Bay	34	20	11	3	93	82	43
Detroit	36	15	12	9	91	99	39
Toronto	36	17	16	3	99	105	37
Ottawa	35	14	15	6	99	113	34
Florida	35	13	17	5	81	110	31
Buffalo	34	8	23	3	59	98	19

METROPOLITAN DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Pittsburgh	35	24	10	1	108	75	49
Washington	34	18	13	3	107	102	39
Carolina	34	14	13	7	79	94	35
Philadelphia	34	15	15	4	81	93	34
NY Rangers	34	16	17	1	76	91	33
New Jersey	34	13	15	6	78	85	32
Columbus	34	14	16	4	87	95	32
NY Islanders	35	9	19	7	85	121	25

WESTERN CONFERENCE

CENTRAL DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Chicago	37	25	7	5	138	102	55
St. Louis	33	22	7	4	114	80	48
Colorado	33	22	10	1	96	78	45
Minnesota	36	20	11	5	84	83	45
Dallas	33	16	12	5	95	101	37
Nashville	34	16	15	3	78	95	35
Winnipeg	36	15	16	5	95	106	35

PACIFIC DIVISION

	GP	W	L	OL	GF	GA	Pt
Anaheim	36	24	7	5	116	91	53
San Jose	34	21	7	6	112	84	48
Los Angeles	34	22	8	4	94	68	48
Vancouver	36	20	10	6	100	86	46
Phoenix	33	18	10	5	105	103	41
Calgary	34	13	16	5	86	108	31
Edmonton	35	11	21	3	93	120	25

Note: Two points for a win, one point for overtime loss.

Tuesday's results
Boston 2 Calgary 0
Buffalo 4 Winnipeg 2
Tampa Bay 3 NY Islanders 2 (SO)
Florida 3 Toronto 1
Anaheim 5 Detroit 2
Montreal 3 Phoenix 1
Philadelphia 5 Washington 2
Minnesota 3 Vancouver 2 (SO)
San Jose 4 St. Louis 2
Chicago 3 Nashville 1
Dallas 3 Colorado 2
Edmonton at Los Angeles

Monday's results
Winnipeg 3 Columbus 2
Pittsburgh 3 Toronto 1
Ottawa 3 St. Louis 2 (OT)
Colorado 6 Dallas 2

Wednesday's games

All Times Eastern
Ottawa at New Jersey, 7:30 p.m.
Pittsburgh at NY Rangers, 8 p.m.

Thursday's games
Phoenix at Toronto, 7 p.m.
Minnesota at Pittsburgh, 7 p.m.
Boston at Buffalo, 7 p.m.
Columbus at Philadelphia, 7 p.m.
Calgary at Detroit, 7:30 p.m.
Nashville at Tampa Bay, 7:30 p.m.
Florida at Ottawa, 7:30 p.m.
Montreal at St. Louis, 8 p.m.
Vancouver at Dallas, 8:30 p.m.
Edmonton at Colorado, 9:30 p.m.
San Jose at Los Angeles, 10:30 p.m.

Friday's games
Anaheim at New Jersey, 7 p.m.
Washington at Carolina, 7 p.m.
NY Islanders at NY Rangers, 7 p.m.
Florida at Winnipeg, 8 p.m.
Vancouver at Chicago, 8 p.m.

SCORING LEADERS

	G	A	Pts
Crosby, Pgh	19	28	47
Kane, Chi	19	26	45
Malkin, Pgh	9	32	41
Getzlaf, Ana	16	23	39
Ovechkin, Wash	27	10	37
Tavares, NYI	13	24	37
Perry, Ana	21	15	36
Backstrom, Wash	8	28	36
Steen, StL	22	13	35
Thornton, SJ	5	30	35
Seguin, Dal	18	15	33
Kunitz, Pgh	17	16	33
Sharp, Chi	16	17	33
Kessel, Tor	17	15	32
Ryan, Ott	16	16	32

Not including last night's games

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Indiana	20	4	.833	—
d-Miami	18	6	.750	2
Atlanta	13	12	.520	7½
d-Boston	12	14	.462	9
Detroit	12	14	.462	9
Charlotte	11	14	.440	9½
Washington	10	13	.435	9½
Toronto	9	13	.409	10
Chicago	9	14	.391	10½
Cleveland	9	15	.375	11
Brooklyn	9	15	.375	11
Orlando	8	17	.320	12½
New York	7	17	.292	13
Philadelphia	7	19	.269	14
Milwaukee	5	19	.208	15

WESTERN CONFERENCE

	W	L	Pct	GB
d-Portland	22	4	.846	—
Oklahoma City	20	4	.833	1
d-San Antonio	19	5	.792	2
d-L.A. Clippers	17	9	.654	5
Houston	16	9	.640	5½
Phoenix	14	9	.609	6½
Denver	14	10	.583	7
Dallas	14	10	.583	7
Golden State	13	12	.520	8½
New Orleans	11	11	.500	9
Minnesota	12	13	.480	9½
L.A. Lakers	12	13	.480	9½
Memphis	10	14	.417	11
Sacramento	7	16	.304	13½
Utah	6	21	.222	16½

x - clinched playoff berth; **y** - division; **z** - conference.

Tuesday's results
Portland 119 Cleveland 116
Charlotte 95 Sacramento 87
L.A. Lakers 96 Memphis 92
Oklahoma City 105 Denver 93
New Orleans at Golden State

Monday's results
Detroit 101 Indiana 96
Boston 101 Minnesota 97
Atlanta 114 L.A. Lakers 100
Miami 117 Utah 94
Washington 102 New York 101
Brooklyn 130 Philadelphia 94
Orlando 83 Chicago 82
L.A. Clippers 115 San Antonio 92

NHL. Iggy now 2-0 against former team

With the emotions and hoopla of playing against his former team now a week and some 2,500 miles behind him, Jarome Iginla felt more relaxed facing Calgary again.

Iginla assisted on Zdeno Chara's two power-play goals, which were all the Boston Bruins needed in a 2-0 shutout of the Flames on Tuesday night.

David Krejci also had two assists and Tuukka Rask made 21 saves for the Bruins, who beat the Flames a week before in Iginla's first game as an opponent against Calgary. Iginla received a warm welcome back, but did not register a point in Boston's 2-1 win against the team he captained for nine of his 16 seasons with the Flames.

"Last week for myself, it felt a little bit different. This was more business," said Iginla, who has 13 assists in his first season with the Bruins. He was traded to Pittsburgh last March, then signed with Boston as a free agent in the off-season.

Boston was coming off a 6-2 loss at Vancouver on Saturday, when Rask was pulled after allowing four goals on 23 shots. Rask's teammates helped him recover from shaky performance by holding the Flames to 21 shots, including just four in the second period.

"We regrouped in the second and really never looked back after that," said Rask, who got his third shutout of the season.

Reto Berra had a much busier night at the other end and played well enough to keep Calgary close.

"We played pretty good, especially in the first period. We had our chances," Berra said. "I think we fight. We try. We do everything. ... There's no other way than just keep going like that and the luck will come back on our side for sure."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DRIVE

End the Soul searching with Kia

ALL PHOTOS WHEELBASEMEDIA.COM

Review. New looks, new platform, but the same ...

MALCOLM GUNN
wheelbasemedia.com

It has a lot of new in it, on it and under it, but unless you're really paying attention, you might not realize it. On the surface, you have to wonder about the time and money spent to build the 2014 Kia Soul, but it's really no different than with brands such as Mini that spend millions on a new car that looks much the same as before. That's "the brand" after all.

The Mini has more history than the Soul, but the Soul is no less unique and there is a certain cachet about it. Only a handful of models have tried to match the Soul's artful shape since it arrived for the 2011 model year. For the mid-cycle refresh, Kia's California and Korea-based design teams used the 2012 Track'ster concept show vehicle as a starting point. They did tone down that bit of zaniness (a two-door wagon doesn't cut it out in the real world), but a number of shape-shifting elements were passed along to the 2014 Soul. The Soul's overall packaging has also been upsized a bit. The distance between the front and rear wheels increases by about 2.5 centimetres while about 1.5-centimetres has been added to the width.

These changes, along with a slight body-height reduction, give the Soul a more planted appearance. On the practical side, cargo space has been increased slightly and the liftgate opening is now six centimetres wider. The added size comes from a new platform that's larger and considerably stiffer (by 29 per cent). Combined with a numerous suspension revisions, Kia claims the 2014 Soul is quieter and has an improved ride that performs more smoothly over bumps and undulations. Also adding to the cabin's allure is a thoroughly revised and upgraded dashboard, control panel and seat coverings. Nearly all of the plasticity bits are now covered in/replaced with soft-touch materials, as are the door panels. The steering wheel resembles a game-console controller, but at least the controls are large enough to be activated by average-sized digits.

Both of the Soul's four-cylinder engine choices return for 2014, albeit in slightly revised form. The base 1.6-litre unit is rated at 130 horsepower and 118 pound-feet of torque (previously 138/123), while the optional 2.0-litre four-cylinder returns with the same 164 horsepower as before, but with a slight increase in torque. Kia says both powerplants make more torque in lower rev ranges for better around-town performance. With an $18,700 starting price the base Soul LX covers the basics, but includes heated outside mirrors, six-speaker audio system and Bluetooth short-range wireless networking. Along with the larger engine and standard air conditioning and automatic transmission, the mid-range EX adds keyless entry, cruise control, and heated front seats.

Atop the Soul trim trio, the SX has 18-inch wheels and power-folding mirrors, while the interior comes with dual-zone climate control and a rearview camera. The options list is truly extensive and covers off a navigation system with 20-centimetre touch-screen, power-sliding panoramic sunroof, 10-way power driver's seat and premium Infinity-brand sound package. Taken in its entirety, the Soul, like the Mini Cooper, is set up to be a niche brand unto itself with a wide range of pricing and options and, of course, that unmistakable "Soul-ness."

Compare

1 Fiat 500L
Base price: $21,700

2 Nissan Cube
Base price: $19,100

2014 Kia Soul

- **Type.** Four-door, front-wheel-drive compact wagon
- **Engines (hp).** 1.6-litre DOHC I4 (130); 2.0-litre DOHC I4 (164)
- **Transmissions.** Six-speed manual; six-speed automatic (opt. with 1.6; std. with 2.0)
- **Base price (incl. destination).** $18,700

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Winter gas: The blend of the festive season

Higher RVP. Reid Vapour Pressure levels are higher in the fuel used during the cold months to ensure easier starts for vehicles

JIL MCINTOSH
Drive@metronews.ca

Just as the weather changes from summer to winter, so does gasoline. Stations are now selling winter gas, specially blended for the season.

"Winter gas can have a higher RVP, or Reid Vapor Pressure," says Wayne Moorehead, marketing manager for Canadian Tire Petroleum. "That is a measurement of the volatility of the fuel, and how subject it is to evaporation. In winter, you want a fuel that has higher volatility, because it's easier for the vehicle to start."

But there's more to it than that, and it comes down to government-mandated emissions standards. There are several places where gasoline vapours can enter the atmosphere: at the station when you're filling up, out of the filler neck if your gas cap isn't tight, and possibly out of the tailpipe, if small amounts of unburned fuel make their way back there.

Gasoline evaporates faster when the outside temperature is hot. A fuel with lower RVP—one that's refined specifically to evaporate more slowly—is less likely to send harmful emissions into the air, and so the mandated standards require refineries to make lower-RVP fuel for sale during the summer months.

However, lower-RVP fuel requires a different refining process. It's costlier to make, and Moorehead says it's tougher to produce the large quantities of fuel needed in winter. Since gasoline naturally evaporates more slowly at cold temperatures, the emissions standards allow for higher-RVP fuel to be sold in the winter.

When it's cold out, some drivers worry about their fuel freezing up. However, it's far less of a problem now that cars have fuel injection, rather than carburetors, which were far more likely to experience issues with their fuel lines icing up.

Keeping your fuel tank full will help prevent water in the gas, which is the stuff that freezes. "Drive on the top half of the tank, not the bottom half," Moorehead says.

"A fuller tank has less area for condensation to take place, and having more fuel will spread out any water that is in there. People should also make sure the fuel cap fits properly, too. If you have a loose cap and it's not sealed properly, there's an opportunity for moisture to get in."

That full tank could also help ensure your safety. Cars generally get poorer mileage in the winter, and if the weather turns bad or traffic backs up, your commute could take much longer than normal. If your tank is close to empty, you could run out of gas and be left stranded.

Tips

- **Manual.** Go by the octane recommendation in your owner's manual. If you only need 87-octane regular fuel, there's no need to use premium.
- **Location, location.** Be smart when fuel-shopping. You'll burn up a few cents difference if the cheaper station is far away, or there's a long line at the pumps.

Winter gasoline in Canada is different than gasoline used during other seasons. CANADIAN TIRE

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GT model with Technology Package shown. Certain features available only on 2014 Mazda3 GS and GT models.

Three ways to beat the winter driving blues

Fun, diversity and technology. Enjoy the shaky ride and the skill involved to control in harsh conditions while appreciating the tires that help you do so

AUTO PILOT
Mike Goetz
drive@metronews.ca

Seems to me it's just as crucial to prepare your mood for winter driving as it is to prepare your vehicle for winter driving.

This occurred to me last weekend as I drove through a winter storm, or at least what the weather media elite here in Central Canada now call a winter storm. Could be wrong, but didn't we once just call this type of thing "winter"? Anyways, here are three ways you might adjust your mood, to be the boss of winter driving, and not the other way around…

Realize the Fun Factor

It's not a wintery mess, it's an opportunity to get the vehicle a little "loose" on the snow. And that's fun. Well, fun until you hit something hard, and a lot of people in uniforms come calling. Sliding around an empty, snow-covered parking lot, used to be the time-honoured way teenage boys learned car control.

Put on some Twisted Sister and give it a try. Even if you don't have a run-off safety zone or empty parking lot at your disposal, just revel in the extra brain energy it takes to drive on slippery surfaces. It's engaging, entertaining and probably at least as effective in staving off dementia as doing crossword puzzles.

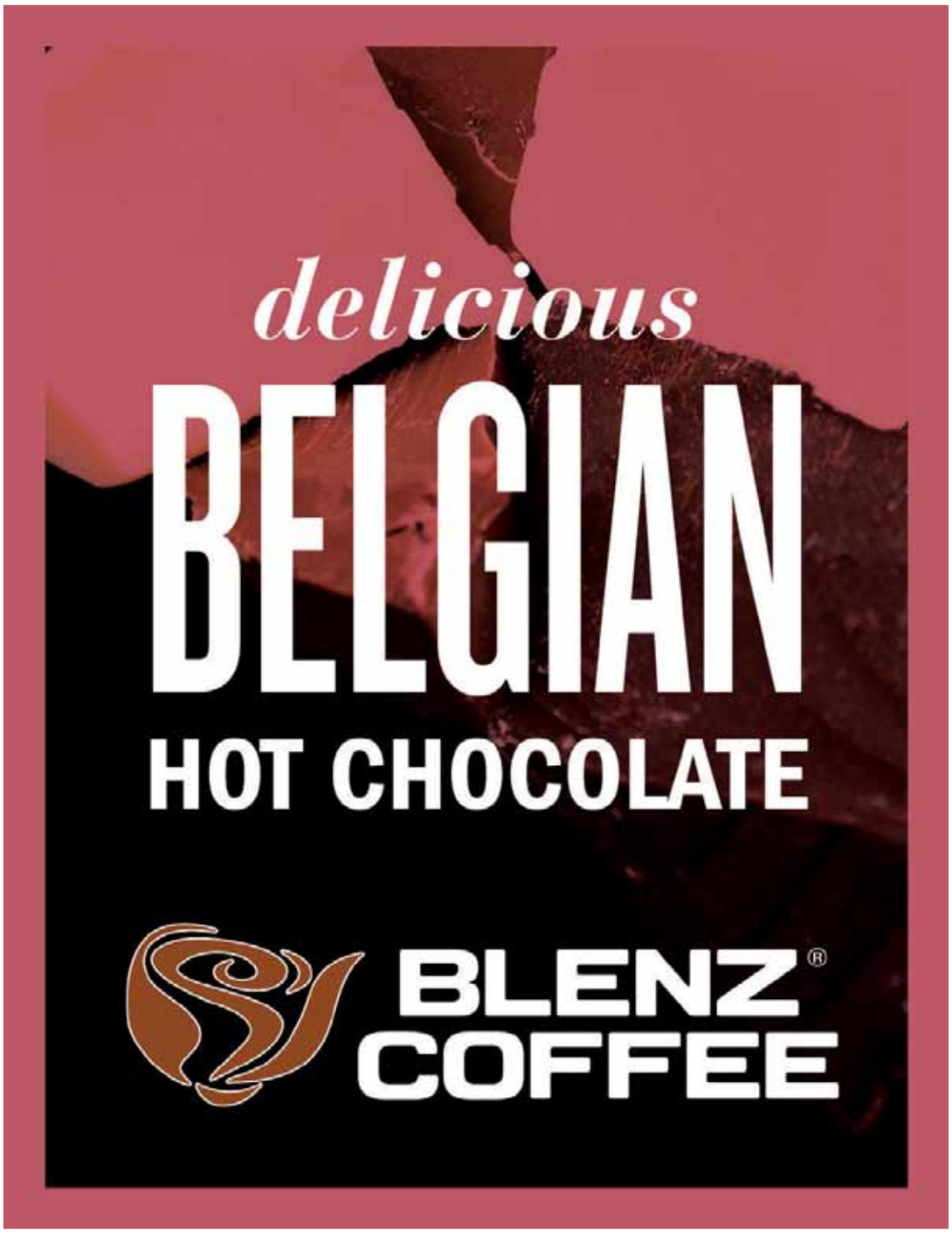
Appreciate the Diversity of Driving Talent

Nothing separates the good driver from the duffer like a snowy road. The speed differential between a person who knows how to drive in the snow, with a vehicle equipped for such, versus a person who has no clue, with a vehicle with even less of clue, is really quite amazing. If you're the former, and following the latter and can't pass, it can be one of the most exasperating driving scenarios you'll every encounter. It's the driving equivalent of having your recess time cut into, because your teacher won't release the whole class until everybody has their coats on, and some of your classmates are still confounded by the physics of zippers. Instead of seething and showing off your excellent vocabulary of four-letter words, why not just revel in the diversity, and let patience and the pride of your superior driving abilities be your predominant state of mind.

Leverage the Technology

Winter tire technology has shot up lately. They used to be quite a bit better in the cold, slush and snow than all-seasons. Now they're crazy better. They take a winter weakling of a vehicle and turn it into a minor superhero of a winter vehicle, and driving a superhero is definitely mood-altering. And we'd like to give props to Canadian Tire, for being the first to commission the development of an all-season tire that actually changes colour at 7 degrees Celsius, the point at which they start to struggle, by becoming less pliable and less able to grip the road. It's your signal that it's time to swap them for those super capable winters.

Interestingly, the technology is not unlike a mood ring. When the temperature drops, you mood is susceptible to drop too. But it doesn't have to — mind bend it the other way.



Joe Hallett of the British rubber development firm, ARTIS, holds the concept tire commissioned by Canadian Tire. It's sidewall turns blue at 7 degrees C, when it's time to get into the winter tire mood. PHOTO: CANADIAN TIRE

Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
You will get exactly what you deserve today: no more and no less. If the rewards are good don't doubt that you have earned them; and if the rewards are not so good then aim to do better next time.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
You will have to do something that makes you unpopular but if you don't do it now you may have to do something twice as bad later on.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
Money matters may be causing you concern but other aspects indicate you can still have lots of fun. Besides, if you keep too tight a hold of the purse strings now you may have to spend more later.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
The important thing today is that you don't over-extend yourself physically, financially or emotionally. Know your limits and stay within them.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
Cosmic activity in positive areas of your chart urges you to open up and let friends and family know what you need in terms of both material wellbeing and emotional support.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
People will be demanding of you today and there may come a time when you realize you are being taken for a ride. The fact is they could have done most of these things for themselves if they wanted to. Make them wish they had.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
At some stage today your frustration is likely to bubble over and you will say or do something that you later regret. But, even so, it's good to remind those around you that your patience is finite.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You won't get things all your own way today, especially on the home front where partners and loved ones are anything but reasonable. The good news is this is only a passing phase.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
There will be a setback concerning a money matter or business deal and you won't be happy about it. But is it worth getting worked up about?

♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
It seems you are stuck with a decision you took a while back and would do anything to get yourself out of now. That might just be possible today but the planets warn it won't come cheap.

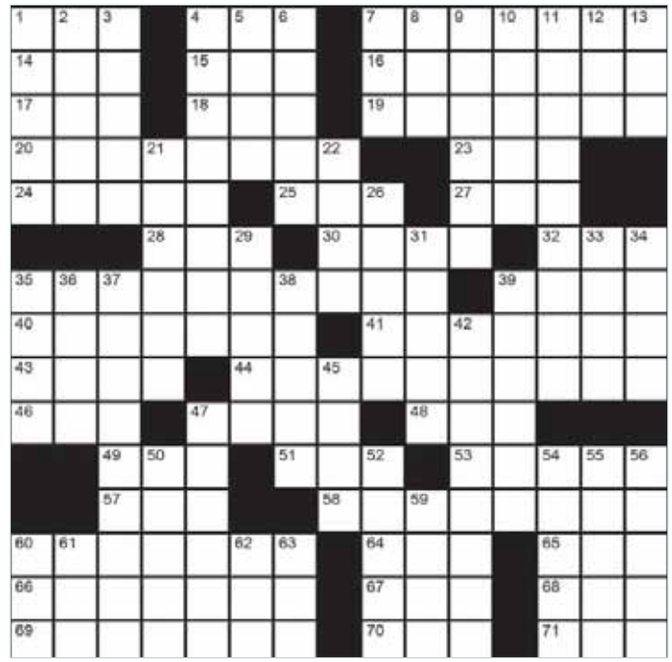
♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Delays of one sort or another are likely over the next 24 hours but while it may be frustrating it could also inspire you to try a different route.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
You seem to have lost your way a little and the planets suggest you swallow your pride and ask someone who knows what they are doing to help you. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



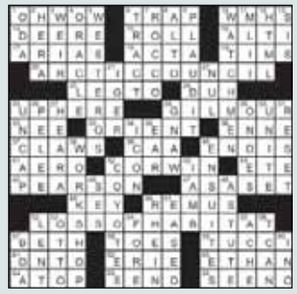
Across

1. 15, 30 or 50, e.g.
4. Opening
7. Truck
14. Airport sched. word
15. British singer Rita
16. By mistake: 2 wds.
17. __-disant (Self-styled)
18. Martini ingredient
19. Canadian comic book superheroine, __ of the Northern Lights
20. Saskatchewan city east of Saskatoon
23. Driver's proof, e.g.
24. Improvise
25. Sushi tuna
27. Tattoo artist's supply
28. "__ _ guy walks into..."
30. Botanist Mr. Gray's
32. Sports org.
35. Michael J. Fox, e.g.: 2 wds.
39. Earth's inner
40. Where Zagreb is the capital
41. Acquiesces
43. Er, I don't know-ish
44. Winter resort accommodations: 2 wds.
46. Literary fairy queen
47. Molt
48. Fashionable monogram
49. Freelancer's encl.
51. Six, in Italy
53. Entire
57. No Scrubs group
58. Canadian hockey brothers Phil or Tony
60. Mercy Mercy Me (The __) by Marvin Gaye
64. Playboy Mansion's man, for short
65. Dorothy, to pals
66. Encounter: 2 wds.
67. Goof
68. Bug kind
69. Alberta village, home of the World's Largest Pyrogy
70. Actor Mr. Knight, et al.
71. Uncle on Seinfeld

Down

1. Alexander's nickname
2. Peacock's feeling
3. Czech composer, Rudolf __
4. 1960s dancer's outfit part: 2 wds.
5. Botanical 'coat'
6. Zoo attraction
7. Wine: French
8. Compass†point
9. Steve McQueen war movie, __ __ for Heroes (1962)
10. Dick __, legendary Montreal Canadiens coach
11. De-cypher: 2 wds.
12. Mr. Chaney
13. Period
21. France/Spain: Bay of __
22. "Take __!"
26. Hero of Upper Canada, Sir __ Brock (b.1769 - d.1812)
29. TLC's Breaking __
31. Like a shoe's support
33. Guitar bar
34. Not as much
35. Pond guck
36. __ S. Rombauer (Joy of Cooking author)
37. Yukon: __ Territorial Park
38. "For goodness __!"
39. Orchestra instruments
42. Left-overs
45. Obsession, __ fixe
47. Canadian cafe chain, __ Cup
50. __ __ the Family
52. The Kid __ __ Tonite by Loverboy
54. Word with Wave
55. Make up for
56. __ 6/49
59. "...and a partridge in a __ tree."
60. Work unit
61. __-de-sac
62. Ronny & The Daytonas hit
63. Far, quaintly

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

6			3					
4	5			9				
		8				7	4	
	4		7		5			8
1			9		3			2
9			6		8		1	
	2	3				9		
				8			2	4
					1			7

Yesterday's Sudoku

9	5	2	4	1	8	7	6	3
3	4	8	6	2	7	9	1	5
1	7	6	9	3	5	8	2	4
6	3	5	1	4	9	2	8	7
2	8	9	7	6	3	4	5	1
4	1	7	5	8	2	3	9	6
5	2	1	8	7	4	6	3	9
7	9	3	2	5	6	1	4	8
8	6	4	3	9	1	5	7	2

Today
6°/-1°
Partly cloudy
Thursday
3°/1°
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